

We Claim:

1. A method of selecting one or more decorative products based on color comprising the steps of:
  - (1) providing a plurality of decorative product databases, each said database containing product data on one type of decorative product and color data comprising a color value for each decorative product;
  - (2) selecting at least one decorative product in one or more of the databases;
  - (3) identifying the color data of the decorative product(s) selected in step (2);
  - (4) searching the databases of step (1) for decorative products different than those selected in step 2 and having a coordinating color based on the color data identified in step (3); and
  - (5) identifying one or more decorative products in the other databases of step (1) which have color values which coordinate with the color value of the decorative product(s) selected in step (2).
2. The method of claim 1 in which the databases are in digital form and stored in a computer.
3. The method of claim 2 in which the databases are accessible via a computer network.
4. The method of claim 2 in which the searching function is done on a computer.
5. The method of claim 2 in which step (5) is done through the aid of an algorithm.
6. The method of claim 1 in which the color value of the decorative product(s) in step 3 is determined with a spectrophotometer.

7. The method of claim 1 in which at least one of the decorative product databases contains data on paints.

8. The method of claim 7 in which at least one other decorative product database contains data on products selected from the group consisting of wallpaper, fabric, floor coverings, and window treatments.

9. The method of claim 1 in which the color value comprises the hue, chroma, and brightness of the product.

10. The method of claim 9 in which the color value comprises an  $L^*a^*b^*$  measurement of the product.

11. The method of claim 1 in which the decorative product(s) identified in step (5) has a color value which best matches the color value of the decorative product(s) selected in step (2).

12. The method of claim 1 in which the decorative product(s) identified in step (5) has a color value for a color that complements or contrasts with the color for the color value of the decorative product(s) selected in step (2).

13. The method of claim 1 in which the databases of step (1) contain additional information on the decorative products comprising product supplier, price, product code, size, or style.

14. The method of claim 13 in which step (5) includes identifying the additional information for the coordinating decorative product(s).

15. The method of claim 13 in which step (5) identifies a decorative product(s) from a single supplier.

16. The method of claim 13 in which step (5) identifies a decorative product(s) having a price within a predetermined price range.

17. A system for coordinating decorative products based on color comprising:

- (1) a plurality of databases, each said database containing product data on one type of decorative product and color data comprising a color value for each decorative product;
- (2) means for determining the color value of at least one selected decorative product in one or more of said databases of component (1);
- (3) means for searching another database of component (1) for a decorative product having a color value coordinating with the color value of a selected product; and
- (4) means for identifying one or more decorative products in the other databases of component (1) which has a color which coordinates with the color of the selected decorative product(s).

18. The system of claim 17 in which the databases are stored in digital form in a computer.

19. The system of claim 18 in which the databases are accessible via a computer network.

20. The system of claim 17 in which the means for searching the databases is a computer.

21. The system of claim 17 in which the means for identifying a decorative product comprises an algorithm.

22. The system of claim 17 in which the means for determining the color value of a selected decorative product(s) in component (2) is a spectrophotometer.

23. The system of claim 17 in which at least one of the decorative product databases contains data on paints.

24. The system of claim 22 in which at least one other decorative product database contains data on products selected from the group consisting of wallpaper, fabrics, floor coverings, and window treatments.

25. The system of claim 17 in which the color value comprises the hue, chroma, and brightness of the product.

26. The system of claim 25 in which the color value comprises an  $L^*a^*b^*$  measurement of the product.

27. The system of claim 17 in which said component (3) searches for a decorative product(s) having a color value which best matches the color value of a decorative product(s) determined by component (2).

28. The system of claim 17 in which said component (3) searches for a decorative product(s) having a color which complements or contrasts with the color of the selected product(s).

29. The system of claim 17 in which the databases of component (1) contain additional information on the decorative products comprising product supplier, price, product code, size, or style.

30. The system of claim 29 in which component (4) identifies the additional information for the coordinating decorative product(s).

31. The system of claim 29 in which component (4) identifies a decorative product(s) from a single supplier.

32. The method of claim 29 in which component (4) identifies a decorative product(s) having a price within a predetermined price range.

33. A method of selecting one or more decorative product(s) based on color comprising the steps of:

- (1) providing a paint database containing color data;

- (2) providing at least one other database including (i) data on decorative products other than paint and (ii) related paint data on paints having colors coordinating with the colors of the decorative products in the other database(s);
- (3) searching for a preselected decorative product in one of the paint or other decorative product databases;
- (4) identifying the related paint data for the preselected decorative product;
- (5) searching the other decorative product database for the related paint data identified in step (4); and
- (6) identifying another decorative product in the other decorative product database having the related paint data identified in step (4).

34. The method of claim 33 in which the other decorative product types are selected from the group consisting of wallpaper, fabrics, floor coverings, and window treatments.

35. The method of claim 33 in which the related paint data of step (4) includes identification information on paint from a primary supplier.

36. The method of claim 35 in which the first database contains data on paint from the primary supplier and data on paint from at least one secondary supplier.

37. The method of claim 36 wherein the related paint data for paint from the secondary paint supplier comprises the identification information on paint from the primary supplier.

38. A system for coordinating decorative products based on color comprising:

- (1) a first paint database containing data on color;
- (2) at least one other decorative product database containing (i) data on another type of decorative product(s) and (ii) related

paint data on paints having colors coordinating with the colors of the decorative products in the other database(s);

- (3) means for searching for a preselected decorative product in one of said databases;
- (4) means for identifying the related paint data for the preselected decorative product; and
- (5) means for matching the related paint data of the preselected decorative product with paint data of one or more other decorative products in said other decorative product databases to select one or more decorative products that coordinate with the preselected decorative product.

39. The system of claim 38 in which said product types of the other databases are selected from the group consisting of wallpaper, fabrics, floor coverings, and window treatments.

40. The system of claim 38 wherein said paint data includes identification information on paint from a primary supplier.

41. The system of claim 40 in which said paint database contains data on paint from the primary supplier and data on paint from at least one secondary supplier.

42. The system of claim 41 in which the related paint data for the secondary supplier paint comprises said identification information on paint from the primary supplier.

43. The system of claim 38 in which said related paint data for said second databases includes information on a plurality of paints.

44. The system of claim 43 in which said related paint data on a plurality of paints corresponds to a plurality of colors in one product in one of said second databases.

45. The system of claim 44 in which one of said colors is a background color in said product and another of said colors is an accent color in said product.

09870073-052001